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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: CRACKS IN THE ALLIANCE -- HOW STRONG IS THE GLUE?

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Since the July 29 elections, the Alliance for European Integration (AIE) has overcome numerous hurdles to elect a Speaker, form a government, and launch reforms. But while the AIE's four leaders have made numerous compromises, each compromise has revealed the differences within the group. Most significantly, rivalry and mistrust between PM Vlad Filat and presidential-candidate Marian Lupu has strained the Alliance's cohesion. It is widely believed that Filat fears he might lose his Prime Minister seat if Lupu becomes President and that he has decided his interests would be better served by repeat elections. The prospect of new parliamentary elections in 2010 should Lupu fail to secure election as President could push them further apart, even threatening a split in the Alliance. At the same time, the Communist Party (PCRM) continues to push a "left-center" coalition of their party, Lupu's Democratic Party, and perhaps AEI leader Serafin Urechean's Our Moldova Alliance (AMN). Nonetheless, both Filat and Lupu remain bound by mutual interest and have assured us that they are committed to the AIE. End Summary.

Significant Alliance Achievements

¶2. (C) In the four months since its formation after the July 29 repeat elections, the AIE's achievements have been impressive. The coalition's four leaders quickly resolved the structure and composition of their new government and divvied up leadership positions. They consolidated control over state institutions and rapidly reached agreement with the IMF, nominated a negotiating team for MCC, amended legislation, and began ambitious reforms.

Ideological Differences

¶3. (C) Though there have been a series of thorny issues to resolve, the clear benefits of cooperation to maintain a parliamentary majority allowed the necessary compromises to be reached. However, at each of the key steps, complex behind-the-scenes negotiations were required to allow the leaders to reach consensus. And each passing compromise has revealed differences among the AEI's constituent parties and leaders.

¶4. (C) Ideologically, the Alliance partners are a motley crew, united more by opposition to the

Communists than by common positions. They run the gamut from right of center -- Filat and especially Speaker/Acting President Ghimpu, who believes in unification with Romania -- to the left of center Lupu and Urechean, who argue for a more balanced relationship with both Russia and the West. Differences in orientation come into play when determining policy on a host of political and economic issues, most visibly on relationships with Russia and with NATO, and also on domestic issues such as Moldova's high school history curriculum.

15. (C) Both Filat and Ghimpu have expressed concerns that Lupu -- who left the Communist Party in June -- was not truly committed to Moldova's Euro-Atlantic integration. (Note: Despite Ghimpu's initial concerns about Lupu's sincerity in leaving the PCRM, since then both Ghimpu and Urechean have consistently expressed support for Lupu's election.) At the same time, several AIE leaders privately have disparaged Ghimpu. For example, after the AIE's initial meetings, Filat warned the Ambassador that Ghimpu's strong rightist views "will present problems" for Alliance unity. On several occasions Filat has also expressed frustration with Ghimpu's handling of issues and has even questioned his competence. Lupu also has worried that Ghimpu is an irritant to the Russians (and has told us that the PCRM has repeatedly offered to ally with him if he will dump Ghimpu as Speaker.)

Filat - Lupu Rivalry

16. (C) Policy differences also have been accompanied by personal clashes and dueling ambitions between Alliance leaders. The fundamental fault line within the Alliance is in fact the competition between Filat and Lupu, the two younger, more ambitious members of the foursome. The two initially clashed in August when Lupu upset the initial AIE power-sharing agreement -- in which Lupu would be President and Filat Speaker -- by demanding the Speaker position. A compromise was reached by which Ghimpu became Speaker and Filat the PM-candidate, but the dispute left much bad blood between the two.

Filat: Lupu Cannot Be Trusted

17. (C) Their mutual mistrust appears to only have grown in subsequent months. Filat has expressed concerns about Lupu's ties to Russia and uncoordinated visits to Moscow. For example, in late October, amidst reports that both Lupu and Voronin were traveling to Moscow, Filat told the Ambassador that he did not believe Lupu was sincere on issues related to Moldova's relations with Euro-Atlantic institutions and was concerned that he (Lupu) was cooking up a deal with the Russians. Filat warned that if Lupu adopted a political position that he (Filat) considered unacceptable, he would not vote for Lupu for President. In late November, Filat and FM Leanca (who is from Filat's party) again expressed alarm to the Ambassador at reports that Lupu and PCRM leader Voronin would be traveling to Russia.

18. (C) Furthermore, Filat has mentioned on several occasions his concerns that Lupu is not to be trusted as President. In particular, Filat is concerned that Lupu will sack him as PM.

Lupu: Filat Looking to Elections

¶19. (C) At the same time, Lupu has made clear his lack of trust in Filat. For example, in late October he complained to the Ambassador that Filat was not giving him readouts of his (Filat's) meetings (such as those with Voronin and Voronin's closest advisor MP Mark Tkaciuk), and charged that Filat had decided that his interests were better served by repeat elections than by having Lupu as President. (Note: PCRM MP Igor Dodon alleged to the Ambassador in early November that Filat had told him "not to vote for Lupu.") Lupu also told DAS Russell on November 19 that "other Alliance leaders" were not campaigning hard enough for his election.

¶10. (C) Lupu also complained to the Ambassador that Filat was using the media under his control (the newspaper Timpul and the news service Unimedia) to further his interests. For example, he charged that during the election of the Prosecutor General (in early October), Filat's media had suggested that Urechean and other Alliance members were selling positions. Lupu told us that at an October 7 meeting of the four leaders to discuss the nomination of the Prosecutor General, Lupu and Filat "were literally yelling at each other in rage" over this suggestion. Lupu said he was upset by Filat's high-handed manner in dealing with other Alliance leaders -- including summoning them to a meeting 30 minutes before the vote and sitting "in a big chair like a king" while the others were given smaller seats.

Comment

¶11. (C) From the very inception, it has been clear that the Alliance contains ideological differences and competing egos. The disagreements have only increased, with the election (or non-election) of Lupu on December 7 now being a potentially critical test for the Alliance. Should Lupu

believe that Filat sabotaged his election -- rumors are circulating (see septels) that Filat's MPs may vote against Lupu even if enough PCRM MPs break ranks to otherwise secure Lupu's election -- he may bolt into the waiting arms of the PCRM, who continue to hold out the offer of a coalition. There is also the possibility that even if the PCRM boycotts the vote (leading to a failed election), Lupu, facing the prospect of a lengthy period as a "regular" MP before new elections, could decide to ditch the Alliance for the Communists. Finally, the prospect of early parliamentary elections themselves could divide the leaders further as each begins to focus on their party's electoral campaign and prospects.

¶12. (C) Nevertheless, it has been equally clear that by working together, the Alliance leaders have formed a majority in Parliament and have put together a coalition government. They have overcome many significant hurdles, and all -- including Filat and Lupu -- have told us repeatedly that they understand they have no real choice but to stick together at this time. United, they can work together to achieve their common goals.

CHAUDHRY